

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application.

Claims 2-5, 8, 9, 11-14, 17, 18, 20-23, 26, 27, 29-32, and 35-37 are in this application. Claims 2, 4, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 27, 29, 31, and 36 have been amended, and new claim 37 has been added. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the specification. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment. It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, were in full compliance with the requirements 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Claims 2, 4-5, 8-9, 11, 13-14, 18, 20, 22-23, 26-27, 29, 31-32, and 35-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,160,553 to Robertson et al.

An interview between the Examiner and Applicants' attorney, Dennis Smid, was held on January 18, 2005. Mr. Smid wishes to thank the Examiner for her time and consideration during the interview.

Independent claim 2 has been amended herein in the manner discussed during the interview, which the Examiner indicated would be distinguishable over Robertson et al.

For reasons similar to those described above with regard to amended independent claim 2, amended independent claims 4, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 27, 29, 31, and 36 are believed to be distinguishable over Robertson.

Furthermore, claims 5, 8, 14, 17, 23, 26, 32, and 35 depend from one of amended independent claims 2, 4, 9, 11, 13, 18, 20, 22, 27, 29, 31, or 36, and are therefore distinguishable for at least the above-recited reason.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 2, 4, 8, 9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 20, 22, 23, 26, 27, 29, 31, 32, 35, and 36 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) be withdrawn.

Claims 3, 12, 21, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Robertson in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,761,655 to Hoffman.

Applicants submit that claims 3, 12, 21, and 30 depend from one of amended independent claims discussed above and are therefore distinguishable for at least the above-recited reasons.

Applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 3, 12, 21, and 30 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) be withdrawn.

Applicants have further added claim 37, which is dependent on independent claim 2 and is, therefore, distinguishable from Robertson and the applied combination of Robertson and Hoffman for the reasons previously recited.

In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited references, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference, or references, providing the basis for the contrary view.

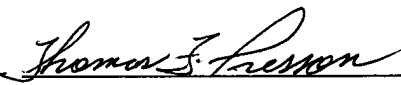
In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in

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this application are patentable and Applicants respectfully request early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any fees that may be needed, and credit any overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,
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